



December 1999

Together, we can solve environmental problems with communities in common-sense ways

Learn more about the Metro East Sustainable Growth Resources Group

The Metro East Sustainable Growth Resources Group (the Group) is a volunteer organization comprised of local, state, and federal organizations committed to creating and maintaining a sustainable environment and community. Its membership represents a range of perspectives and its mission is to gather, develop, and disseminate information regarding growth issues in the Metro East, Illinois, area. The Group's charge is comprised of three key areas: (1) Illinois Growth Task Force, (2) public education, and (3) planning.

The Sustainable Growth Resources Group was formed to deal with urban sprawl related challenges surfacing in the Metro East region including traffic congestion, city center decay, loss of open spaces and

"If this area wants to have a public hearing [regarding growth issues], let us know." - Illinois State Representative Rikka Sloan of the Illinois Growth Task Force.

natural areas, and financial strain due to infrastructure costs. These issues are typical of problems arising in many other communities. Another recurring problem in the Metro East region is the stormwater runoff and flooding affecting many communities in the region. With support from several groups, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through its Gateway Team, coordinates the Group's logistics and meetings through professional facilitators. The Group has met several times over the past six months and will continue to meet to develop approaches for how to best manage these issues.

The Group has already accomplished their goal of becoming more familiar and active with the Illinois



Illinois State Representative Rikka Sloan talks about the Illinois Smart Growth Initiative to the Metro East Sustainable Resources Group.

Growth Task Force. The Group was selected to receive one of 12 public member committee slots on the Governor's Growth Task Force. The public member slot will allow the Metro East region to become more visible and vocal in discussing recommendations for how to manage urban sprawl issues and to create a

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EPA: Removal begins at portion of Sauget Area 2

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 recently announced that cleanup work has started on a site near Sauget, Illinois, known as site Q. The 93-acre property lies within the floodwall along the Mississippi River and is part of the Sauget Area 2 Superfund site.

Cleanup activities will occur on 40 acres of the site, primarily in the southern portion near Cargill Road.

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more sustainable environment. The Group encourages active participation and suggestions for progress.

EPA invites interested individuals to view the Metro East Sustainable Growth Resources Group's past meeting minutes on the Gateway webpage located at:

www.epa.gov/gateway

EPA encourages your input and involvement. Please review the Questionnaire on the webpage under "Hot News." EPA is committed to providing accurate and timely information that best fits the needs of the community. If you have questions and/or comments about the webpage or the Metro East Sustainable Growth Resources Group, please feel free to contact the Gateway Regional Team Manager, Noemi Emeric, at (312) 886-0995 or at emeric.noemi@epa.gov.

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Workers have already begun removing drums and liquid waste including paints, solvents, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). This part of the cleanup is expected to last about 90 days. The EPA expects to spend about \$2.4 million on this stage of the cleanup.

EPA On-Scene Coordinator Kevin Turner explained why winter is the best time to do the cleanup. "The site is in a flood plain, and is wet most of the year," Turner said, "but at this time of year, the site is dry." Turner continued to explain how the cleanup will reduce exposure risks, "We had a lot of hunters, fishermen, and offroad vehicles using the area, so this should prevent anyone from being exposed to high levels of contaminants."

The Sauget Area 1 and 2 Superfund sites are located near Cahokia and Sauget, Illinois. The sites were used as industrial and municipal disposal areas starting in the 1930s.

The Sauget Area 2 Superfund site includes five different source areas totaling about 344 acres. All of Area 2 is located west of Illinois Route 3.

For more information on the Sauget Superfund cleanups, residents can call Gordie Blum, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator, at 800-621-8431 ext. 38501



Tom Wobbe of the Southwestern Illinois Mapping and Planning Commission (SWIMPAC) leads a discussion on Metro East growth issues.

U.S. EPA contributes to stormwater effort in Metro East

For the past several months, EPA has been attending a series of meetings of the Metro East Regional Stormwater Committee (the Committee). The Committee, made up of representatives from local, state, and federal government, exists to solve water quantity and quality problems that are a result of stormwater in the Metro East area.

EPA facilitated many of the meetings with the goal of creating a stormwater document designed to:

- Clarify the Committee's position on stormwater issues.
- Educate the community.
- Showcase past stormwater work.
- State the Committee's future goals.

The Committee hopes that the document will be completed during December and then shared with the public.

EPA began concentrating on the stormwater effort as part of its overall work regarding sustainable growth in Metro East. "What makes this work so great is the fact that partners from all levels of government are getting together to provide a common solution to Metro East's stormwater problems," said Andrew Anderson of EPA.

Abandoned buildings top the list of community concerns. Air pollution and streets in bad condition also trouble area adults.

Half of the residents in the region's urban core consider "abandoned and rundown houses or apartments" to be a serious concern. In fact, one of every three cite this issue as their "top" environmental worry. These were the findings of a recent telephone survey of 600 residents in communities that border the MetroLink line. The residents were all adults, aged 18 and older, who live in the zip code areas outlined in the map below.

Residents of the City of East St. Louis and the Forest Park neighborhood in the City of St. Louis were especially concerned about abandoned and rundown properties. More than half said the problem is "very serious." The majority of young people, aged 18-34, and those with three or more children in their households, also worried about this issue.

Air pollution was another issue cited as very or moderately serious by almost half of community residents. Those most likely to give pollution the "very" serious rating live near Lambert St. Louis airport (24 percent) and in the City of East St. Louis (34 percent). Residents with the lowest income levels were more likely than affluent respondents to find this issue to be very serious.

Young people were more likely to complain about a third major problem area - streets in bad condition -



Percentage of community residents ranking issues as "very" or "moderately" serious

# 1	Abandoned and run-down houses	50%
# 2	Air pollution	50%
# 3	Streets in bad condition	44%
# 4	Litter and trash	42%
# 5	Abandoned industrial sites	41%

than were those in other age groups. Slightly more than one in of every four (28 percent) of those aged 18-34 rated streets as a very serious problem, compared to 22 percent of all those responding to the survey.

Litter, trash, and abandoned industrial sites are among the other issues that are a serious concern for 40 percent or more of community residents. These percentages can be seen in the chart above.

Residents say newsletters, local spokespersons, neighborhood meetings, newspapers, and radio are best communication tools.

Residents of communities surrounding the MetroLink corridor like to get information about environmental problems and ways they can help solve them through a variety of ways. Community residents expressed the strongest preferences for newsletters. Fifty-eight percent said newsletters would be very effective.

Forty-two percent thought a designated neighborhood resident who communicates with people in the area would be effective. Thirty-nine percent stated that block-level meetings would be effective. And, about one third thought articles in newspapers and on the radio would be effective.

Residents showed the least enthusiasm for "high tech" and government communication media. Approximately 54 percent said that an internet home page and an e-mail newsletter would be totally ineffective. Just more than 43 percent said the same about government offices and social service agencies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Should you have any questions on the information in this fact sheet or seek more information on the Gateway Initiative, feel free to contact the following individuals:

Gordie Blum

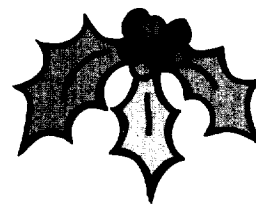
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Happy Holidays
from the
Gateway Team!



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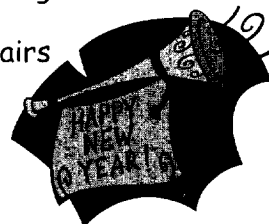
Dion Novak; Superfund

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